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SECTION TWO

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## CUBA and U.S. POLICY

By Theodore Draper





# Cuba and United States Policy

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

THEODORE DRAPER has spent the last 25 years as a journalist, historian and editor who has specialized in international affairs and American foreign policy, with extended excursions into the history of the American labor movement in general and the American Communist movement in particular. He has worked in and written about France, Germany, Morocco, Haiti, Guatemala, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and other countries.

The author of four books, his first, *The Six Weeks' War*—a study of the French defeat of 1940—appeared in 1944. His second, *The Battle of Germany*, published in 1946, was the official history of the 84th Infantry Division, the unit with which he served in World War II. When the project on Communism in American Life was formed by the Fund for the Republic, Draper was asked to write the history of the Communist party of the United States from its beginnings to 1945. His first volume in this series, *The Roots of American Communism*, came out in 1957; the second, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, was issued in May of last year. He plans to start working on the third and final volume, dealing with the period 1930-45, next fall.



## FOREWORD

MUCH HAS happened in Cuba and in Cuban-United States relations since the publication of Theodore Draper's first supplement, "Castro's Cuba: A Revolution Betrayed?" in *THE NEW LEADER* of March 27, 1961. The abortive invasion of April 17 has, of course, raised new problems—but old ones have also reappeared in one form or another more sharply than ever.

Draper's previous supplement was mainly devoted to the period before Fidel Castro came to power in January 1959. The present supplement deals chiefly with the period after he came to power. The two, therefore, complement each other and may be read independently or together.

Information concerning the price of reprints, which applies to both pamphlets, appears on the back cover.



# Cuba and United States Policy

By Theodore Draper

THE ILL-FATED invasion of Cuba last April was one of those rare politico-military events—a perfect failure. So many things went wrong that it was relatively easy to fix the blame on anyone or anything connected with it. So far, the organization responsible for the operation, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), has come in for the largest share of criticism. But experience should warn us that the “intelligence failure” is usually the initial stage of a post-mortem. When a fiasco is really pure and complete, something deeper and more fundamental has probably been responsible. I do not think that the Cuban invasion is going to be an exception to the rule.

There were two sides to the failure, Cuban exile politics and United States policy. The first Cuban exiles to take refuge in the United States early in 1959 were the former *Batistianos*. Numbering only a few thousand, they succeeded mainly in giving Fidel Castro a propaganda point to score against the United States for harboring them. They were no serious threat to Castro's regime. They were thoroughly discredited, morally and politically. They were leaderless, since not even the most hardened and highly placed of dictator Fulgencio Batista's former henchmen dared to wish him back in power. They were, above all, utterly without support in Cuba itself.

Then came the frightened rich. Some of them were a step ahead, or behind, of Castro's newly formed Ministry for the Recovery of Illegally Acquired Property. Some simply preferred the rather less revolutionary atmosphere of Florida. Almost all had backed or belonged to parties of the Right, respectable or otherwise. Some had held their noses or had averted their eyes during the dictatorship, and a few had even contributed to Fidel's cause in the past.

The main exodus came the following year. It started in the spring, speeded up in the summer, and took on the proportions of a mass flight by the end

of 1960. Among the spring refugees were the older politicians of the pre-Batista period, such as the former Premier, Manuel Antonio de Varona, and the former Minister of Education, Aureliano Sánchez Arango; some of them were urged on by the threat of physical violence, as in the case of Sánchez Arango. The large-scale expropriations that summer induced a large portion of the business community, big and small, to go. The purge of the universities and secondary schools drove out hundreds of teachers. The Communist take-over of the trade unions added many of their formerly pro-Fidelista officials to the stream. Professionals and intellectuals fled in increasingly large numbers. And, finally, Castro's own 26th of July Movement began to send a flow of disillusioned members and sympathizers to the United States, among them the former Minister of Public Works, Manuel Ray, the former Minister of Finance, Rufo López Fresquet, and the former President of the National Bank of Cuba, Felipe Pazos.

By 1961, over 100,000 political emigres had gathered in the United States. And this number was only a fraction of those who had tried to get out but could not. If all who wanted to leave had been able to do so, the figure might easily have reached a quarter of a million, an incredible percentage for a small island with a total population of 6.5 million. The emigration was top-heavy with businessmen, professionals and intellectuals, but skilled and semi-skilled workers were conspicuous in the later stages of the outpouring. Nevertheless, the Cuban exiles were hardly representative of Cuban society as a whole.

Politically, the world of the exiles seemed like a crazy quilt. A staggering number and variety of *organizaciones, movimientos, asociaciones, comites, frentes, juntas, uniones*—and these categories do not exhaust the list—proliferated in Miami. The fragmentation, however, was less bizarre and alarming than it seemed because so many of the groups were little more than cliques of self-appointed leaders. In the profusion and confusion, three main tendencies could be distinguished—the traditional Right, Center and Left—within which there were, of course, many different forms and shades.

In general, the Right had benefitted from the old order in Cuba and was less opposed to it than disappointed that it had not lasted longer. It was passionately anti-Communist, but cast its net so far and wide that some of President Kennedy's closest advisers could be—and, indeed, were—caught in it. The Center chiefly came out of the 1944-1952 pre-Batista regimes of Ramón Grau San Martín and Carlos Prío Socarrás, with their peculiar mixture of promise and disappointment. Unlike the Right, its most responsible leaders had rejected and even conspired against Batista, but they had also rejected and in some cases had conspired against Castro as Batista's successor. The Left was mainly distinguished by its concern for social as well as political reform. It was almost entirely drawn from the former ranks of the 26th of July Movement which, in the course of 1959, had split into pro- and anti-Communist segments.

Into this turmoil and strife among the thousands of desperate and impatient Cuban exiles, a catalyst injected itself, both of its own volition and by invitation.



## 1. INVASION IN THE WINGS

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT Richard M. Nixon has let it be known that he advocated training Cuban guerrilla forces to overthrow Castro as early as April 1959. In that month, Castro and Nixon spent three hours together in Washington, as a result of which Nixon wrote a three-page memorandum. Evidently he called Castro not a Communist but a "captive" of the Communists, and, therefore, even more dangerous. Since only the conclusions, but not the text, of Nixon's memorandum have been "leaked," it remains to be seen what Castro could have told Nixon to have justified such drastic action. Whatever it was, it was not enough to convince the other policy-makers, and American policy continued to be cautious and indecisive.

But what would have happened if Nixon's recommendation had been accepted? In the spring of 1959, the bulk of Cuban exiles in the United States were repentant or unrepentant *Batistianos*. The internal situation in Cuba was still fluid, whatever Fidel Castro's personal position may have been. The vast majority of Cubans as yet were admittedly under his spell. The Cuban Communists had already made great headway but they had run into resistance in Castro's own movement—as we now know, within his Cabinet—the full potential of which could not yet be determined. On his return to Cuba in May, Castro found such dissension in his own ranks on the issue of Communism, and it was so openly expressed in the organ of the 26th of July Movement, *Revolución*, that he considered it necessary to make a major speech on May 8 in which he went to great pains to disassociate himself from "Communist ideas."

A Cuban guerrilla force in the spring or summer of 1959 would necessarily have been organized with the material at hand, and that material was almost exclusively composed of ex-Batista officers and soldiers. It would have been forced to invade a Cuba which was only beginning to show signs of disillusionment with Castro and which, in any case, still infinitely preferred—and perhaps always will prefer—him to Batista. And even if an invasion would have been "successful," it could only have been the first stage of a military occupation, wholly dependent on American arms, if not more, and faced with the hostility of the great majority of Cubans.

One can only marvel at this proposal of April 1959. If Fidel Castro wanted the United States to do anything, it was to ally itself with the *Batistianos* in its midst. He had defeated them when they were in power, and he had least to fear from them when he was in power. In his eagerness to overthrow Castro Nixon could think of nothing better than a military operation, and he was limited, whether he knew it or not, to the means at hand. His military "solution" was, in effect, political abdication. It was rejected, and better judgment prevailed. Yet, a residue of Nixon's thinking remained, and it always hovered in the wings as an alternative policy if the situation continued to deteriorate.

Much remains obscure and controversial about Castro's trip to the United States in the spring of 1959. Castro's propagandists have made a great deal

of the fact that he was not invited by the American government and that no American offers of aid were made to him. The truth is, as several of his closest associates were aware, that Castro had made it known he did not want an official invitation and was not interested in offers of aid. Whatever Castro may have said to Nixon, his public statements, speeches and interviews in the United States were among his most "democratic" utterances. After his departure, the Eisenhower Administration decided to send a new ambassador to Havana, Philip W. Bonsal, with instructions of a conciliatory nature. But Castro would not see him for almost three months and then brushed him off publicly as a person of no importance.

## 2. POINT OF NO RETURN

THE REAL POINT of no return in Cuba was passed in the fall of 1959, long before any overt American action was taken against the Castro regime. It was marked by the arrest of Hubert Matos, a school teacher by profession, who had brought the first plane-load of arms and ammunition from Costa Rica to Castro's besieged forces in the Sierra Maestra mountains in March 1957. Matos fought through the rest of the rebellion, rose to the highest rank of Major, and was entrusted after the victory with the military leadership of Camaguey province. He was, therefore, in an exceptional position to know what was going on, and he began in the spring of 1959 to question why Communists were being put into leading positions in provincial and town administrations at the expense of 26th of July members.

When an epidemic of such replacements broke out in the rebel army itself, he decided to demonstrate his opposition. After vain efforts to discuss the matter with Castro, Matos' protest took the form of a resignation, which he sent on October 19. His case was not an individual aberration. A majority of the Camaguey army leaders, the head of the 26th of July Movement in the province, and others resigned with him. The scandal of the increasing Communist take-over in Camaguey was an open one, and opposition to it in the Army and the Movement had been building up for months.

Matos was arrested at home (not "trying to escape," as one canard has it) on October 20. Castro rushed to Camaguey and cracked down on the dissenters. The repercussions of this incident might have been less explosive in Castro's own top leadership if he had not insisted on charging Matos with "treason." The charge was too much for a group within the Cabinet, which had itself been watching with increasing misgivings the curious favoritism shown to Communists. One minister, Faustino Pérez, the former head of the Havana underground, refused to sign the Cabinet resolution denouncing Matos as a traitor. Toward the end of October, six Cabinet members came together for a private discussion—President Osvaldo Dorticós, Minister of Education Armando Hart, Minister of Public Works Manuel Ray, Minister of Transportation Julio Camacho, Minister of Communications Enrique Oltuski and Faustino Pérez of the Ministry for the Recovery of Illegally Acquired Property. They agreed among themselves about the Communist danger, but one or two of them, probably Dorticós or Hart or both, reported



the tenor of the discussion to Castro. He came to the Cabinet meeting the next day determined to force a showdown and insisted that anyone without full confidence in him did not belong in the Cabinet. Pérez and Ray expressed their views firmly. Oltuski and Hart spoke up more ambiguously. Pérez had presented his resignation before the meeting and Ray did so afterward. Half-hearted efforts were made to change their minds, but they were permitted to go on November 26. At the same time, Major Ernesto "Ché" Guevara replaced Dr. Felipe Pazos as head of Cuba's National Bank.

Matos' trial was held in December. I have read about 90 published pages of the record, including all of the most important testimony by Fidel Castro, and I suspect that the Matos trial will go down in recent Cuban history as the equivalent of the "Moscow trials" of the 1930s. Not a semblance of treason, in any meaningful sense of the term, was proven, or even charged, against Matos. He was merely accused of having been worried about the Communist advance, and it was contended that his resignation could have been so contagious that the regime might have been endangered. So it might have been, and so it is, in every system which provides no means for peaceful change and in which even the most passive forms of resistance take on a significance unthinkable in anything resembling a democratic order. Matos was condemned to 20 years' imprisonment. It contrasted oddly with the 15 years—of which he had served only 20 months—to which Fidel Castro had been sentenced by the Batista dictatorship for leading a full-scale attack on an Army barracks.

The implications of Matos' punishment were boldly exploited by the Communists. Early in February 1960, Juan Marinello, president of the *Partido Socialista Popular* (PSP), the official Cuban Communist party, for the first time publicly equated anti-Communism with treason: "He who raises the flag of anti-Communism raises the flag of the traitor." In the same month, Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan signed the first Soviet-Cuban agreement in Havana, amidst an official reception that betokened more than trade relations. In March, Blas Roca, the PSP's General Secretary, associated his party with the Government and orientation of Fidel Castro, and offered the Communist program "to illuminate the road toward the historically inevitable transition to Socialism."

Blas Roca's boasts provoked a reply from the popular writer and radio commentator, Luis Conte Agüero, whose personal and political ties to Castro had been extremely close, but who now voiced the fear that the Communists were "achieving their purpose, pulling us instead of marching by our side." Immediately, Conte Agüero was crushed.<sup>1</sup> The pro-Castro press

1. A writer in the Trotskyist paper, the *Militant*, has chided me for shedding "a few sympathetic tears" for Conte Agüero. How little this Trotskyist has learned from the history of his own movement! In the first years of the Bolshevik regime, Trotsky helped to crush the Kronstadt rebellion, the Social Democrats and opposition groups within the Bolshevik party. When his turn came, he was defenseless. The irony is that the Trotskyists can expect as short shrift in Cuba as they got in Soviet Russia, and it will be because the issue was not Conte Agüero but the way he was silenced.

Indeed, the Cuban delegation at the First Latin American Youth Congress in Havana in the summer of 1960 issued a long denunciation of the Trotskyist delegates from Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Paraguay. It used the following language: "The project of the manifesto presented by the Trotskyists repeats in its observations on the Cuban revolution the same counterrevolutionary calumnies that issue daily from the imperialist arsenal by the mouthpieces of the United States State Department" (*Revolución*, August 5, 1960).

attacked him so violently that he decided to go off the air. An organized crowd of demonstrators prevented him from making a farewell appearance. Castro himself devoted a four-hour television program to ridiculing, insulting and denouncing him. Conte Agüero took the hint and sought refuge in a foreign embassy on his way out of the country.

These were episodes in what had become, for Fidel Castro, a second civil war. In the first, he had represented a democratic cause, and it had required a civil war against Batista's dictatorship. In the second, he represented a totalitarian alliance with the Communists, and it required a civil war against the democratic elements in his own movement. Castro waged the second civil war as ruthlessly as the first, striking down all those who stood in his way and leaving them only the alternatives of following him blindly or fighting back in a second underground.

### 3. FRD AND CIA

IN THE SPRING of 1960, the Eisenhower Administration made the decision which it had refused to make the previous spring and which led directly to the invasion attempt the following spring. For months, a strong if not the dominant wing of Cuban exiles had been seeking American support for every conceivable means of overthrowing Castro, including the arming and training of an invasion force. The exiles at this time were still predominantly representative of the Right with little desire or ability to organize a democratic underground or to wean the masses of Cubans in Cuba away from Castro. After a year of resisting this pressure, the Administration, influenced by the course of events in Cuba, agreed to help organize a force of Cuban exiles—not necessarily to use it but to have it ready. The implementation of this decision, requiring the greatest secrecy, was entrusted to the Central Intelligence Agency. It need not be imagined that the Administration had to look for Cuban exiles to carry out its plan; plenty of exiles were perfectly satisfied with it and displeased only with the delay.

The first problem was which Cubans to work with. The initial choice fell on a group known as the *Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionario* (MRR), of which the Secretary General was a former captain of the rebel army in his late 20s—Manuel Artime. In the spectrum of Cuban exile politics at that time, the MRR stood somewhat left of center. It was, however, a relatively small group incapable of uniting the mass of exiles. To overcome this weakness, a united front was fostered, and the *Frente Revolucionario Democrático* (FRD) was formed by five groups early in June 1960.<sup>2</sup> In effect, the FRD represented the Center of the exile world at a time when the Right was still unduly prominent and the Left had not yet arrived in large numbers. Since Artime was put in charge of the FRD's military activity, he remained the chief link to the CIA.

2. The five groups were: *Movimiento de Rescate Revolucionario*, headed by Manuel Antonio de Varona; *Movimiento Democrático Cristiano*, of José Ignacio Rasco; *Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionario*, of Manuel Artime; *Asociación Montecristi*, of Justo Carrillo; and the *Frente Nacional Democrático* (Triple A), of Aureliano Sánchez Arango.



But the FRD also seemed unwieldy to the CIA. It was headed by a five-man Executive Committee, each with equal power, each jealous of his own status and distrustful of the others. The CIA made known that it preferred to deal with a single president or chairman of the Committee, and this demand precipitated a crisis in the FRD. One of its strongest personalities, Aureliano Sánchez Arango, had been complaining for some time about the very thing that outraged some of the Cuban leaders in the invasion attempt six months later—the treatment of the FRD as if it were an appendage of the CIA, subject to the latter's orders and incapable of living a life of its own. "The brief history of the relations between the FRD and the organism assigned to deal with Cuban questions is the history of an incessant series of pressures and impositions," were the first words in a confidential memorandum submitted by Sánchez Arango to the FRD on September 30, 1960. His protest went unheeded, and he took his organization out of the FRD.

But the other leaders of the FRD were satisfied with the arrangement, or at least not sufficiently dissatisfied to change it. "Tony" Varona was named "coordinator" of the remaining four groups, and the FRD became more dependent than ever on the CIA. The split in the FRD presents the Cuban-American problem in essence without any of the lurid details associated with the later invasion. Too many Cuban exile politicians of the Right and Center, with the notable exception of Sánchez Arango, were content to accept the dictation of the CIA, just as the CIA was content to dictate to them.

For the amenable Cuban politicians, the arrangement was most convenient. At one stroke they solved most of their financial and organizational problems outside the stresses and strains of the Cuban community. The best of these politicians were free of any taint of the Batista dictatorship, but their own pasts identified them with regimes that by their corruption had prepared the way for Batista, and they were hardly the symbols of a new Cuba determined to get something better than Batista or his predecessors.

On the American side, the Eisenhower Administration was, at best, cautious and indecisive; at worst, it played into Castro's hands. Such an administration was attracted, in time, to a military "solution" of the Cuban problem—tightly controlled from above, with a minimum commitment to any program that might disturb the sensibilities of the Cubans or the Americans who had benefitted most from the *status quo ante*. For this purpose, the Eisenhower policy needed Cuban exiles who had not been compromised by the Batista or Castro regimes, but were not compromised by anything very different from the pre-Batista regimes either.

Yet the Eisenhower Administration was not capable of carrying out even this course consistently or successfully. The invasion force of Cuban exiles, which the CIA undertook to organize, did not reflect the political complexion of the FRD. Since the military operation was ostensibly a "non-political" one, former members of Batista's Army were readily admitted on the ground that their training and availability made them desirable. Most of them were, in fact, typical of the career officers and conscripts who had made up Batista's Army, which had been in large part the pre-Batista Army, and had not fought very hard for him. But the sadists and "criminals" among them had enabled

Castro to make the entire Army a by-word of shame and to disband it amidst a popular sigh of relief. Even on this unselective basis, moreover, the so-called invasion force did not amount to much. It numbered, I have been told, less than 1,000 until January 1961. In effect, the Eisenhower Administration dawdled along without a serious political or military policy for a revolution that was plunging from stage to stage at breakneck speed.

#### 4. ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

WHILE THIS setup was able to withstand Sánchez Arango's walk-out, it was threatened from another direction. By the summer of 1960, a different kind of Cuban exile began to arrive in the United States. José Miró Cardona, the Cuban Premier in the first six weeks of Castro's rule, sought asylum in July, and Manuel Ray, the former Minister of Public Works, went underground in May and left Cuba the following November. Except for his past association with the Castro regime, Miró Cardona was not noted for a radical social outlook, but Ray and others were unrepentant critics of Cuba's former political and social order. They were representative of that portion of the 26th of July Movement which had taken Castro's original program of democratic social reform seriously, had believed in him, and had reluctantly come to the realization that he was heading inexorably toward a form of Communist totalitarianism. They were not willing to repudiate all that had been done in Castro's first months in power, but neither were they willing to tolerate at any price the surrender of all political and intellectual freedom. They organized the *Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo* (MRP) and their first manifesto stated: "To fight against the '*fidelismo-comunista*' faction is not to fight against the Revolution for which thousands of Cubans gave their lives, but to redeem it from those who have betrayed it."

The influx of this group for the first time made the Left a serious rival of the Right and Center in the Cuban emigration. It did not take long for the other two wings to wake up to the threat and to launch a major political offensive at the newcomers. The issues may seem theoretical, but the implications were not.

Was the revolution betrayed? For the Right and a portion of the Center the answer was emphatically, No. They took the position that Fidel Castro and his closest aides had never been anything but, or anything better than, Communists, and that his revolution had always been Communist in character. They treated the 26th of July Movement as if it had been and was a branch of or a cover for the official Communist party. They condemned anyone who had ever belonged to the Movement, and especially anyone who had occupied a post of some responsibility in Castro's government, as unfit for decent Cuban political intercourse.

I cannot pretend that I am a neutral bystander in this controversy because I have already written at some length on it. It has seemed to me that the merest acquaintance with Castro's statements and promises before he took power demonstrates that he has used his power for altogether different ends. Like many arguments, however, this one may go on forever because the op-



posing sides tend to talk about different things. One side is really concerned with the inner intentions of Fidel Castro and his closest associates, especially his brother, Raúl, and his political mentor, Guevara. I would not rule out the possibility that Fidel always knew where he was going, and the likelihood is much greater for the other two. But from the available evidence I strongly doubt it, at least in Fidel's case, and I am mildly amused that his enemies on the farthest Right should attribute to him a political consistency and integrity that he has done little to deserve. Whatever the answer to this question may prove to be, it will at most tell us something about Fidel, not about his entire Movement.

For the 26th of July Movement was never homogenous, and the larger it grew in 1957 and 1958, the less homogeneous it became. It included those who merely wished to restore the constitution of 1940 and those who demanded "a real social revolution." It attracted those who admired and those who detested the United States. It took in fervent anti-Communists and ardent fellow-travelers. To hold this conglomeration together, Castro had progressively moderated his program and propaganda. By 1958, he had voiced little more than the traditional aspirations of the socially conscious, democratic-minded Cuban middle and working classes. He may not have been sincere, but many of those who followed him undoubtedly were.

Those who insist that Castro has led a Communist revolution from the start have never thought through the implications of their position. The overwhelming majority of Cubans of all classes were admittedly pro-Castro in January 1959. If they wittingly supported a Communist revolution and knowingly preferred a Communist regime, the anti-Communist cause in Cuba was lost at the outset. But no one, least of all Fidel Castro, has even intimated that this was the case. He took special pains in the first months of his regime to assure the Cuban people that he was not a Communist; the organ of the 26th of July Movement conducted a war of words with the organ of the official Communist party; and the anti-Communists in his Cabinet made no secret of their views. All this may have been a blind, but it was a blind made necessary by the non-Communist character of the revolution. Whatever may have been Castro's personal intent, it should not be confused with the entire anti-Batista rebellion which was much larger and broader than even the 26th of July Movement.

Nevertheless, Castro's ex-associates in exile were met with a furious campaign which accused them of something called *Fidelismo sin Fidel*. It is not clear how *Fidelismo* can exist without Fidel, since he has always been the essential charismatic ingredient that made it possible. And it is not clear what *Fidelismo* is, since it has been several different things in its relatively brief life. In its public expression, the *Fidelismo* of 1958 was only distantly related to the *Fidelismo* of 1960, and even less to the *Fidelismo* of 1961. But whatever *Fidelismo sin Fidel* may mean, it served the purpose of making the break with Castro's regime by Ray, Pazos and the rest of the MRP seem superficial and untrustworthy. If *Fidelismo* was just the same or just as bad as Communism, it made them seem just the same or just as bad as Communists, with or without faith in Fidel. And yet, paradoxically,

they had broken with Fidel precisely because they had believed him when he used to say that *Fidelismo* and Communism were intrinsically different, and because they had refused to follow him into Communism.

These controversies were not altogether theoretical. They were intimately related to a practical question of crucial importance—whether the underground in Cuba or the exiles in the United States should constitute the primary front in the struggle against Castro. For some, the underground came first, and the role of the exiles was mainly to assist and support it. For others, the exiles came first, and the underground had virtually no place in their plans. This choice between the underground and the exiles was one of the chief dividing-lines between the Left and the Right. The Left invariably stressed the underground, the Right was almost exclusively in favor of the exiles, and there were elements of the Center in both camps. Those with an underground orientation could not hope to be effective in Cuba with the same type of program and propaganda that might appeal to many exiles in the United States. The underground had to live and work among Cubans who in the great majority had once believed in Castro and who were most likely to turn against him because he had disappointed them. Many of the exiles had never had any faith in Castro to lose, and he was just as obnoxious to them before taking power as after.

Thus the war against Castro was inextricably bound up with the war among the exiles, and theoretical issues were inextricably bound up with practical implications. A debate over the "revolution betrayed" was also a dispute over the overthrow of Castro primarily by forces in Cuba or by forces in the United States. A decision to organize a relatively small, tightly controlled, professionally led invasion force was an expression both of American policy and of Cuban exile politics.

## 5. THE FUSION

MEANWHILE, in Cuba itself another turning point was reached. I have already suggested that a decisive step was taken in the fall of 1959 with the arrest of Hubert Matos in October, the replacement of Ray, Pérez and Pazos in November, and the cruel punishment of Matos in December. American policy played a relatively minor role in this period. The crisis came from within Castro's own 26th of July Movement and had been brewing from his first month in power. It was generated not by the United States but by the Communists, or rather by their sponsors and protectors in the Cuban government.

The next major step came in the summer of 1960. Although it was far more closely related to actions taken by the United States and has received much more publicity, it was but another stage in a continuous process rather than an impulsive, unpremeditated beginning.

The final rupture between Cuba and the United States was precipitated in June 1960 by the Cuban demand that three U.S.- and British-owned oil refineries in Cuba process two barge-loads of Soviet crude oil. The companies refused, and their refineries were quickly taken over. In July, after



hesitating for months, the Eisenhower Administration suspended the 700,000 tons that remained of Cuba's total 1960 sugar quota of about 3 million tons. Cuba retaliated with a decree expropriating all enterprises and properties wholly or partially owned by U.S. citizens or companies. Most of this expropriation was carried out in August, the rest in September.

These events cannot be understood by themselves, and the "cause" of the wholesale expropriation of American property was only superficially the oil and sugar disputes. The Cuban government had not been paying the three companies for over two years and had piled up a huge debt of \$16 million for oil imports and \$60 million for previous refining. The companies had given up hope of ever getting their money back and expected to be taken over anyway.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the oil companies accounted for only a small portion of the U.S. credits extended to the Castro regime, the total of which amounted to over \$200 million.

As for the sugar quota, the Cuban attitude had been stated by the clairvoyant Guevara early in March 1960: "There is some talk about lowering the Cuban sugar quota, indeed, of suspending it altogether. The sooner the better. For Cuba, it is a symbol of colonialism. We shall be better off without imperialist yokes." After that, it was a tussle between the Castro regime and the Eisenhower Administration to see which could maneuver the other into providing the best alibi and bearing the most blame for lowering or suspending the quota. I doubt that the Eisenhower Administration came off best in this contest, but I am also skeptical that more adroit tactics would have changed anything fundamentally.

Moreover, Castro's wave of expropriation did not stop with American-owned companies. On October 13, 1960, at one blow, Law No. 890 nationalized 376 all-Cuban enterprises, including 18 distilleries, 5 breweries, 4 paint factories, 61 textile factories, 16 rice mills, 11 movie theatres and 13 department stores. Some, as in the case of the well-known Bacardí company, had supported Castro against Batista. The Castro regime expropriated over 3 million acres of U.S.-owned land, but soon afterward also expropriated almost as much Cuban-owned land. The expropriation of foreign properties was clearly only a part of a much larger transformation, and the latter cannot be accounted for by the refusal of three oil companies to refine some Soviet oil or the suspension of 700,000 tons of the sugar quota, the total elimination of which none other than Guevara had demanded "the sooner the better."

Nationalization had never been in Castro's program, except for the electric and telephone companies, and by 1958 he had even changed his mind, or at least said he had, about them. In the fall of 1960, he nationalized on a scale that had appeared inconceivable that very spring. No one reading the Cuban press or speaking to anyone in the regime could have anticipated it. If this was the transition from the "bourgeois-democratic" to the "proletarian" stage of the revolution, the Cuban proletariat had little or nothing to do

3. The Cuban case was based on the Mineral Fuel Law of 1938, which required foreign-owned refineries to process Cuban crude petroleum. The companies replied that this law referred only to oil taken from Cuban soil.

with it. The Castro Movement had never considered itself socialist, and had never, therefore, advocated socialism or conducted any socialist education. Nor had the official Communists been demanding nationalization or intimating that the time had come for socialism in Cuba. The Cuban trade unions were certainly not the repositories of socialist faith. First came "socialism," and then the proletariat was told how lucky it was to have it.

Such transition as there was took place wholly in the top leadership of Castro's regime. The bellwether, as always, was Guevara. At the end of July 1960, he informed a youth congress in Havana that the Cuban revolution was "Marxist." He reiterated this thought in an article published in the official organ of the Cuban armed forces, *Verde Olivo*, in October. Then, on November 7, at a celebration in Havana of the Bolshevik Revolution, a trade union leader, José María de la Aguilera, ventured that it was time to say without fear "that we are marching inexorably towards socialism in our country." These brief and isolated statements exhaust the references to "Marxism" or "socialism" in 1960. They indicate that something was going on in the top echelons of the Castro leadership, but as usual, Fidel Castro himself waited for the right occasion before committing himself, a very different matter from the naive notion that the occasion caused him to commit himself.

The summer of 1960 also introduced a new stage in Soviet-Cuban relations. In July, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev threatened to retaliate with Soviet rockets if Cuba were attacked, a commitment which he later qualified as "really symbolic." By the end of the month, Fidel Castro announced the arrival of the first automatic rifles from Czechoslovakia. By November 8, he exulted: "We have acquired arms, much arms, much more of them than the mercenaries and the imperialists have imagined." Guevara made another long pilgrimage to the East in October-December 1960 and on his return explained, with his usual brutal candor, what had motivated the Soviet bloc to sign up for large quantities of Cuban sugar. The Soviets produced so much sugar themselves that they did not need any from Cuba, he said, but they were willing to give the Cubans advantageous terms for "political" reasons.<sup>4</sup>

And economic aid was not the only thing the Soviets were willing to give for "political" considerations. At a parade in Havana on January 2, 1961, the full range of arms shipments from the Soviet bloc was put on display—heavy tanks, 55 mm. and 105 mm. cannon, truck-drawn field artillery, mortars, rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guns and automatic weapons. On March 4 Castro declared that "Cuba can obtain mountains on mountains of Communist arms," and "Cuba now has more thousands of tons of arms than a year ago." These weapons, and the training that went with them, had obviously resulted from more "political" agreements reached many months before.

The "politics" of the trade agreements and arms shipments was internal as well as external. This aspect of the new situation can also be traced back

4. *Obra Revolucionaria*, 1961, No. 2.



to the summer of 1960. In August 1960, at the Eighth Congress of the PSP, General Secretary Blas Roca set forth the perspective of "complete union," of "fusion," of all the revolutionary forces "in a single movement." At the end of October, as the first installment of fusion, the youth divisions of the PSP and the 26th of July Movement merged to form the *Jóvenes Rebeldes* (Young Rebels). In December, at the meeting of the Communist parties in Moscow, Guevara mentioned the prospect of a "united party" in Cuba.

To help the merger along, Blas Roca and Fidel Castro said *mea culpa* to atone for their old sins against each other. The Communists had to live down their former contempt for Castro's assault on the Moncada Barracks in 1953 as a "petty-bourgeois putsch." At the Eighth Congress, Blas Roca made amends by giving Fidel credit for seeing the possibilities of, and taking the practical steps toward armed struggle to overthrow the Batista dictatorship.

Fidel had a similar problem. Once upon a time—on May 21, 1959, to be exact—he had distinguished his revolution from capitalism and Communism, the one because it "killed people with hunger," the other because it suppressed their liberties, "the liberties which are so dear to man." The human being, he had proclaimed, was being sacrificed in both the capitalist and Communist states, and Cuba intended to make its own "autochthonous" revolution, as distinctive as its music. These words, and others like them, were characteristic of his first months in power; a proud and even arrogant Castro used to insist that the Cuban revolution had its own superior ideology. For the Communists the memory rankled, and something had to be done before a "complete union" could be sanctified.

On February 1 of this year, the Italian Communist organ, *l'Unità*, published an interview with Castro of unusual significance. One of the questions asked by its correspondent in Havana, Arminio Savioli, was: "Major, what is your opinion of the *Partido Socialista Popular*, the party of the Cuban Communists?"

Castro replied: "It is the only Cuban party that has always clearly proclaimed the necessity for a radical change of structure, of social relationships. It is also true that at first the Communists distrusted me and us rebels. It was a justified distrust, an absolutely correct position, ideologically and politically. The Communists were right to be distrustful because we of the Sierra, leaders of the guerrillas, were still full of petty-bourgeois prejudices and defects, despite Marxist reading. The ideas were not clear to us, though we wanted with all our strength to destroy tyranny and privileges. Then we came together, we understood each other, and began to collaborate. The Communists have given much blood, much heroism, to the Cuban cause. Now we continue to work together, loyally and fraternally."

This new note of ideological inferiority was struck again in a carefully prepared speech by Castro on March 25. The occasion was also typical of the new era. The International Organization of Journalists, a Communist group with headquarters in Prague, recently awarded its annual prize to *Revolución*, the organ of the 26th of July Movement, or what remains of it. In celebration of the event, *Hoy*, the official Cuban Communist organ,

sponsored a banquet for more than 2,000 people in honor of *Revolución* at which the Premier was the main speaker. One passage harked back to the past in the same curiously apologetic and even guilty way.

"The Revolution was beginning," Castro recalled. "It was a process that had to go on for a long time; it had to go on step by step. It was weak in its origins; it was above all weak in the ideological sphere. The leaders of the Revolution had great support among the people, the Revolution in itself had an extraordinary amount of sympathy, for what it had cleared away, not for what it had done; but, ideologically, the Revolution was weak."

And, in a public address in Havana on March 13, in the presence of Premier Castro, the Cuban Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Faure Chomon, declared: "We and the Communists will march together." He added: "The students of tomorrow will say how the people of Cuba made itself Communist, and we will see how all the peoples of Latin America shall be Communist."<sup>5</sup>

There has always been but one real party in Castro's Cuba, the Communist PSP, but it was not good form until recently to show too much deference or attribute too much prominence to it publicly. All that has changed since the summer of 1960. The old-time Communist leaders, Blas Roca, Juan Marinello, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Aníbal Escalante, Lázaro Peña and the rest, all products of the school of Stalinism for a quarter of a century, formerly content to work in the background, have stepped forward to claim their due. The members of the PSP's *Buró Ejecutivo*, or Politburo, have been busy addressing a new type of audience—of Government employees.<sup>6</sup> The former Communist head of the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC), Lázaro Peña, has again visibly emerged as the strong man of its top leadership.<sup>7</sup> *Verde Olivo* was always considered the most openly Communist of the official Government organs, but now the popular magazine, *Bohemia*, is running it a close second. A feature article on Juan Marinello referred to him and Blas Roca as "pupils of the greatest university of all: the marvelous university of Marxism-Leninism."<sup>8</sup>

One more sign of the times in Cuba was the fate of a book. The well-known bookshop in Havana, *Librería Venecia*, had ordered copies of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* in a Spanish translation published in Buenos Aires. The books arrived, but the owner of the shop, Ricardo del Campo Gordón, received a notice that they had been seized as counter-revolutionary literature. He no longer sells books in Cuba.<sup>9</sup> Until a few

5. *Bohemia* (Havana), March 19, 1961.

6. *Revolución*, March 24, 1961, for example, devoted a column and a half to a talk on economic planning by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez to the officials and employees of the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, at which its Director General presided. Another column and a half reported a lecture by Aníbal Escalante, Executive Secretary of the PSP, on "The Cuban Revolution, Its Character and Its Development" to employees and officials of the Ministry of Finance.

7. *Bohemia*, March 26, 1961, carried an article on the CTC, accompanied by photographs of six leaders. The picture of Lázaro Peña led all the rest. At the recent May Day parade in Havana, he marched in the first line, next to Minister of Industries Guevara, President Dorticós, Premier Castro and Blas Roca, in that order.

8. *Bohemia*, March 26, 1961. (The owner and editors of the original *Bohemia* went into exile and now publish *Bohemia Libre* in New York and Caracas.)

9. Far more interest in this incident was displayed in Mexico, where the press reported it widely, than in the United States or Europe, though an interview with Ricardo del Campo Gordón appeared in *Avance* (Miami), April 21, 1961.



months ago, observers in Havana were impressed with the open display of books like *The God That Failed* and Milovan Djilas' *The New Class*. But the purge of this "subversive" literature has almost been completed, and now the visitor is impressed by the place of honor given to the works of Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung and Khrushchev in the bookshop of the Government-owned *Imprenta Nacional* in the lobby of the hotel *Habana Libre* (formerly the Hotel Hilton).<sup>10</sup>

Early this year, also, a major change in agricultural policy was introduced. Hitherto, the so-called cooperatives had received the most attention and publicity. They are now being swiftly overtaken by another innovation, *Granjas del Pueblo* or People's Farms, closely modeled on the Soviets' *sovkhoz*s or state farm system. They are such deliberate imitations that, according to Premier Castro in a speech on January 21, Cuba is importing 1,000 Soviet instructors for the *granjas* and sending 1,000 Cuban farm youth to Russia to learn Soviet agricultural methods. A report on May 17 by Captain Antonio Núñez Jiménez, Executive Director of the Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA), revealed that the cooperatives had already taken second place to the *granjas* in area; the *granjas* now cover 6,567,426 acres or 29.16 per cent of all productive land, and the cooperatives only 2,664,000 acres or 11.83 per cent of the productive land. The cooperatives are still ahead in manpower, 122,448 to 96,498, but at the present rate of growth, the *granjas* will soon forge ahead in this respect, too. In any event, the cooperatives are so tightly controlled by INRA that they could and probably will be easily transformed into *granjas* whenever the Castro regime pleases to go all the way.

And Castro's Cuba even has its equivalent of the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939. Rumors of a deal between Castro and his arch-enemy, Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, began to spread last year. One Dominican radio station suddenly started to specialize in pro-Castro and anti-United States propaganda. Then, in a speech on January 6, the deal was confirmed by Guevara who publicly referred to Trujillo as "now our friend."<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Trujillo intends to give Castro some competition as the exemplar of Caribbean socialism. On May Day, the official Dominican Radio Caribe announced that *Trujillismo* was "the vanguard of socialism" and claimed credit for having taken that road before Cuba.

As one of this year's winners of the Lenin Peace Prize, Fidel made a speech on May 19 in which he showed how far he had travelled politically by bursting out: "Glory to our José Martí! Glory to Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin!"

One reason for these developments was suggested by Castro himself in his interview in *l'Unità*. He was asked: "What has the Socialist camp contributed to the Cuban revolution?" To which he replied: "My boy, what would have happened to us if Khrushchev had not sent us oil, if he had not bought our sugar? And if the Czechoslovaks had not sent us the arms to defend ourselves? And machines, spare parts, technicians?"<sup>12</sup>

The economic agreements, the arms shipments and the piecemeal political fusion were not separate, unrelated events; they were interconnected aspects of a single, simultaneous process. Of the three, the last undoubtedly signifies the most. As long as Castro maintained even a nominal political independence in Cuba, his foreign relations might be distinguished from his internal political position. This distinction has been fading to the vanishing point. Whatever the nascent "united party" may be called, it will merely be an enlarged version of the official Communist party. It will, in effect, represent the induction of the top-ranking *Fidelistas* into the PSP. It would not be too surprising to learn, judging from Castro's obeisance to Communist ideology, that this step has already been taken.

I cannot suppress the feeling that the new self-critical Fidel is totally out of character. Whatever may be the reasons for submitting to the ideology of the party, he can hardly transfer his *mystique* to it, and it still needs him at least as much as he needs it. Yet Castro's newborn humility before the Communists is not merely a pose. He enjoyed the greatest advantage over them in the years of struggling for power, less and less after winning power. While they were still timidly advocating "clean, democratic elections" to get rid of Batista,<sup>13</sup> he celebrated force and force alone. But in that period, his political program betrayed little originality; it was, if anything, less radical than that put forward by Grau San Martín in 1933. Since Castro took power without a real ideology, a real army or a real party, he could conceivably have survived without them only by making his power consistent with his promises, and thus holding his original backing together. But this is precisely what he chose not to do.

In the Communist-style state which he established in Cuba in less time than it took the Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia—80 per cent of the Cuban workers are now employees of the state—a new ideology, a new army and a new party were urgently needed. For all his old boasts that the Cuban revolution was unlike any other and needed no ideology, army or party, Castro has turned to all three for survival, and they are painfully familiar and not at all the seemingly fresh, innocent experiments that so enamoured sympathetic observers in the past.

Fidel Castro must certainly be ranked with the greatest pseudo-messiahs of the century, but no one is likely to mistake him for a creative political thinker. For a long time, he has been dependent on the superior intellect of Guevara who, unlike his nominal chieftain, never wastes words unnecessarily and should always be taken seriously. Guevara once told Mme. Simone de Beauvoir that he would "spend hours explaining a complex economic problem to Fidel," who would then successfully boil it down to half an hour on television the next day. This is the inestimable gift of the popularizer

12. The price Cuba has paid for the Soviet bloc's economic "aid" brings to mind the words recently spoken by the great Peruvian revolutionary, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, now the object of indecent abuse in the official Cuban press: "You ask me what difference is there between our getting a loan from Russia or from the United States? Imperialism in its economic form—in the movement of capital—is the same: both must be paid for. But the political consequences are different. The economic imperialism of totalitarianism brings totalitarianism with it. The economic imperialism of democracy allows us to keep democracy."

13. Declaration of the National Committee, signed by Marinello and Blas Roca, June 28, 1958.

10. Fritz René Allemann, "Die Revolution der Bärtigen," *De Monat*, April 1961.  
11. *Obra Revolucionaria*, 1961, No. 2.



and demagogue, not the genius of an original social revolutionary, and both Castro's strength and weakness explain his usefulness and subservience to the Communists.

There is room for argument about the reasons for the virtually complete symbiosis that has taken place between the Communists and top *Fidelistas*. It may be debated whether this is a good or bad thing. But the willful blindness still flaunted on this subject passes understanding. The assurance last September by Paul Johnson in the British weekly, *New Statesman*, that "in the future perspective of the Sixties" *Fidelismo* and Communism were "natural enemies" seemed a somewhat excessively hazardous way of insisting that there were differences between the two, and one was tempted to admire his recklessness without taking too seriously his literary extravagance. But much has happened since last September, as I have indicated, and one never expected to see such obstinate refusal to face reality turn up in the same place again. Blas Roca had thought the time had come to send forth auguries of "complete union" and "fusion." Fidel had swallowed his pride and had genuflected before the Communists' ideological superiority. Faure Chomon had put not only the people of Cuba but all the peoples of Latin America in the Communist camp. Yet, the leading editorial in the *New Statesman* of April 28, 1961, could brush aside the belief that Cuba "is already a center for Communist subversion" as a "wild over-simplification."

One wonders what would convince the *New Statesman* that Castro and the Communists have all but in name achieved the "complete union" that Blas Roca called for. And if it were convinced, would it make any difference? The implication of all this sensitivity about Fidel's dalliance with the Communists is that there might be something sinful about it. But, somehow, it never turns out that way. Whatever relations Fidel has had with the Communists, his sympathizers and apologists have had no trouble justifying or explaining them away. What the *New Statesman* will say if it changes its mind about the "wild over-simplification" remains to be seen.<sup>14</sup>

## 6. SIGNS OF CHANGE

IN THE SUMMER and fall of 1960, while great changes were taking place in Cuba, the United States was preoccupied with the election campaign and change of administrations. The new Administration was far from a free agent, as a result of the extreme anti-Castro position assumed by John F. Kennedy in the campaign and of the actions taken by his predecessor, especially the rupture of diplomatic relations in January 1961. Nevertheless,

14. The self-righteousness of some British publications on the Cuban question has long been one of the more amusing curiosities of the recent past. After the United States had declared an embargo on all arms to Cuba in March 1958—an action which undoubtedly hastened Batista's downfall, even if it was not basically responsible for it—Great Britain stepped into the breach as one of Batista's main arms suppliers. British planes and tanks were delivered to Batista's forces precisely during the period of the American embargo, and questions were raised about them in the House of Commons. Among the British magazines which did not bother to protest, or even to comment, on this phase, somewhat nearer home, of the struggle against Batista were *Time* and *Tide* and the *New Statesman*. The latter published a report on Cuba on the eve of Batista's downfall by "A Latin American Correspondent" who wrote these whimsical words: "Fidel Castro is as opportunistic as Batista."

a re-examination of United States policy *vis-à-vis* Cuba was undertaken.

On one level, changes occurred. The most notable, on the Cuban exile side, was the formation in March 1961 of the Cuban Revolutionary Council, headed by Dr. José Miró Cardona. While the former American policy had favored the centrist FRD, the new Revolutionary Council was based on both the FRD and MRP, a distinct shift to the left. The Council's Declaration of April 9, 1961, clearly reflected this political shift. "We are not, nor could we be counterrevolutionaries," it asserted. "We were revolutionists who fought against the previous regime, which had impoverished the whole country for the benefit of a minority lusting for gold and power. It is with the same convictions that we now oppose the present regime, which has betrayed our country and plunged it into chaos."

Another passage stated: "Let there be no mistake. During the immediate post-revolutionary period some ideals of the people, which were a part of the national goal, were achieved. It will be necessary to incorporate them into the provisions of the Constitution. There will be no going back to a past which we all oppose—neither Communism nor reaction."<sup>15</sup>

The second evidence of a change was the so-called White Paper on Cuba issued by the State Department. This document defined the "grave and urgent challenge" of Castro's Cuba as follows: "The challenge results from the fact that the leaders of the revolutionary regime betrayed their own revolution, delivered that revolution into the hands of powers alien to the hemisphere, and transformed it into an instrument employed with calculated effect to suppress the rekindled hopes of the Cuban people for democracy and to intervene in the internal affairs of other American Republics."

The U.S. document also interpreted the "betrayal" in the same sense as the Declaration of the Revolutionary Council: "The positive programs initiated in the first months of the Castro regime—the schools built, the medical clinics established, the new housing, the early projects of land reform, the opening up of beaches and resorts to the people, the elimination of graft in government—were impressive in their conception; no future Cuban government can expect to turn its back on such objectives. But so far as the expressed political aims of the revolution were concerned, the record of the Castro regime has been a record of the steady and consistent betrayal of Dr. Castro's pre-revolutionary promises; and the result has been to corrupt the social achievements and make them the means, not of liberation, but of bondage."

On paper, the line had clearly veered to the left. The change was taken seriously not only by the Left-wing MRP but by the Right-wing Cuban exiles who immediately stepped up their campaign against the "revolution betrayed" and *Fidelismo sin Fidel*. The organ of the extreme Right, *Diario de la Marina*, went into paroxysms of rage and vituperation not only against the ex-*Fidelistas* but against the "leftists in the State Department" and "the

15. The full text in English was published in the *New York Times*, April 9, 1961.



SOCIALISTS in Washington.”<sup>16</sup> All those groups which had been left out of, or would not come into, the Revolutionary Council, many of them on the Right, met together at the end of March 1961 and formed a *Junta Revolucionaria de Liberación Nacional*, with Aureliano Sánchez Arango as Secretary General.

The practical implications of the Declaration of the Revolutionary Council and the White Paper of the State Department were, indeed, incompatible with the Right-wing policy of a small, professionally trained, tightly controlled invasion force to “liberate” Cuba from the outside. As late as January 1961, Dr. Miró Cardona, after predicting that a “general uprising” was fast approaching, was asked: “But is that enough? Will there have to be an invasion?” To which he replied: “After the uprising, there will have to be a military decision on whether to help the people with a mass invasion or with a continuation of the infiltration by specially trained men. It is impossible at this point to decide whether a mass invasion will be necessary.”<sup>17</sup> This emphasis on the internal uprising as the primary front in the anti-Castro struggle was a fundamental tenet of the Left wing.<sup>18</sup>

But what to do with the relatively small, professionally trained, tightly controlled invasion force that had been inherited from the Eisenhower Administration? In January 1961, recruiting started once more and about 500 more men were added, for a total of less than 1,500. Again, little political differentiation was made in the selection of recruits. This very lack of discrimination, however, was indirectly responsible for influencing the political composition of the force. Many former members and even officers of the rebel army were available in the emigration. But most of them would not fight alongside former members of Batista’s Army and police, and certainly would not serve under them. I have been told that the ex-Batistianos made up only about 15 per cent of the total but that their percentage went up sharply in the leadership. In one of the Guatemalan camps with about 300 men, it has been reported, one ex-Batistiano officer was enough to cause 230 to go on strike. Nevertheless, the invasion force was broadly representative of the entire exile community—from Batistianos to the sons of Varona and Miró Cardona, from professional military cadre to idealistic young professionals.

## 7. BEHIND THE INVASION

THE PREPARATION for an “invasion” of Cuba was divulged in the Guatemalan paper, *La Hora*, as early as October 30 of last year, and it was then described as “well under way.” The alarm about the Guatemalan camps was first raised in the United States by a most unlikely source—the director

and staff of the *Hispanic American Report*, published by the Institute of Hispanic American and Luso-Brazilian Studies at Stanford University. After some hesitation, the U.S. press went after the story and succeeded in making the camps an open secret without being able to dig out some of the vital details. Some of the figures, guessed at or planted, were ludicrously inflated, and they later contributed to the public misconception of the entire operation.

But the Cuban exile leaders had been wrestling with their consciences about the relatively small force in the camps for a long time, and they knew how politically explosive it was. Before the negotiations for the Revolutionary Council could be consummated, a hitherto unpublished agreement entitled, “Confidential Bases of Unity Between the *Frente Revolucionario Democrático* and the *Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo*” (see Appendix, page 34) dated March 22, 1961, and signed by A. de Varona and M. Ray, was reached. Its second section, “Insurrectional Struggle,” reads:

1. The Council which is formed as a consequence of this agreement must give maximum priority to the aid of the combatants who are already inside Cuba fighting against the Communist oppressor.

2. No person who held an objectionably responsible position with the criminal dictatorship of Batista can be admitted into any armed force which may be organized outside of Cuba. Because of the very harmful effect that any apparent utilization of these elements can have, both organizations agree that they must share the responsibilities of preventing even the use of these persons in the recruiting offices.

3. The military commands of all the revolutionary forces which may be organized outside of Cuba must be in the hands of Cubans who give full guarantee to the President of the Council and to both groups (which sign this document) with respect to their integrity and understanding, their responsibilities and functions in a democratic society, their full deference to the authority of the Revolutionary Council during the insurrectional struggle and to the Civil Government of the Republic.

4. The Revolutionary Council must immediately assume the responsibility that these criteria should fully prevail in the forces which are being organized.

This document clearly embodied a point of view which made the underground in Cuba the primary front and sought to remove any possible taint of *Batistismo* from the invasion force organized outside of Cuba. In principle, there was no reason why Castro should not be opposed by forces inside and outside Cuba, as Batista had been opposed. But the two forms of opposition could work against each other as well as with each other. Priority to the outside force could have a negative effect on the underground, which might be encouraged to wait for “liberation” from the outside. The inclusion of Batistianos in the invasion force would not sit as well with the Cubans in Cuba as with some of those in exile. And the political orientation

16. *Diario de la Marina* (Miami Beach) March 18, 1961. Also see the next three issues for more of the same.

17. *U.S. News & World Report*, January 23, 1961.

18. One figure who cannot be so easily classified is Dr. Aureliano Sánchez Arango, a long-time fighter against both Batista and Castro. He also had taken the position that the anti-Castro underground came first, and he had broken with the FRD on the issue of subservience to the CIA. But he has refused to have any dealings with anyone who had ever served under Castro, and he has strongly rejected the thesis of the “revolution betrayed.” In his latest phase, he believes that distinctions of Left and Right have lost their usefulness in the present Cuban situation.



necessary for the underground struggle differed drastically from the political outlook, or lack of it, characteristic of the invasion force.

The Revolutionary Council and the White Paper represented one side of the new Kennedy Administration's policy, the invasion force the other side, and never the twain did meet. In the 12 days that elapsed between the *Bases Confidenciales* signed by Varona and Ray and the decision to send the invading force to Cuba, nothing had changed and, in so short a time, nothing could have changed. A real change of policy would have required a sharply reversed attitude toward the underground and a complete overhauling of the invasion force. But on April 4, when President Kennedy and his chief advisers apparently made the final decision on the expedition, time was the one thing that could not be reversed or overhauled. A few more months of the Soviet bloc's "mountains on mountains" of arms to Cuba made any new, long-range plan appear to be increasingly difficult and dangerous. Many of the Cuban exiles had been gripped by what may be called a "deadline fixation." They were persuaded, and bent on persuading everyone else, that if Castro were not overthrown by March or April—or June, at the latest—he could never be overthrown.

This frantic desperation that time was running out, combined with an intense conviction that there would never be a better time, may have been contagious. The notion that the "United States gathered together a few 'mercenaries'" for the invasion ludicrously misses the point. The Cuban exiles themselves exerted a tremendous pressure for quick action, and their only apprehension was of the lengths to which the United States might go to help them. In the training camps, a similar mood prevailed, and the option seemed to be to use the force, such as it was, or to disband it. In effect, without starting over again, the Kennedy Administration was basically limited to the policies and instrumentalities of the Eisenhower Administration.

Only one important change seems to have been made in the old plan, which apparently had provided for "air cover" by American planes while the Cubans secured a beachhead. President Kennedy decided against any direct American participation in the attack, including aerial support, and refused to change his mind after the exile pilots had lost control of the air on the second day of the invasion. The American policy seems to have been to train, finance and equip the exiles, but to require them to do their own fighting. This was not very different, in substance, from what the Soviet bloc has done on a vastly greater scale for Castro's forces.

In the end, however, the Cuban Revolutionary Council served as a fig leaf for the invasion. Maximum priority was given to the outside invasion force, not to the Cuban underground. Objectionable personnel were admitted and not weeded out of the invasion force. The Council was not in command of the situation, and its members were humiliated by those who were.

On the surface, two different lines were pursued simultaneously, one for the Revolutionary Council, another for the invasion force. The former implied that some re-examination had taken place in the Kennedy Administration; the latter amounted to an expression of modified Nixonism. The differ-

ence between these two lines is the key to what was wrong with the conception, as well as the execution, of this invasion.

The invasion force was given such absolute priority that the anti-Castro forces inside Cuba were virtually ignored. The inversion of the two was a crucial factor. By putting the invasion first, the Intelligence Agency could only guess at how far the popular rebellion against Castro had gone or what it was capable of doing. It was apparent, even from the speeches that Castro and Guevara had been making, that the Castro regime had been slipping in popular support for months, especially in the middle and working classes. But the opposition knew that it had made the least headway among the peasantry, the teenagers (all of whom carried weapons), a portion of those whose existence was wholly dependent on the all-embracing state machine, an indeterminate propaganda-drenched group in all classes and, of course, the committed Communists and hero-worshipping *Fidelistas*. The process of disenchantment could not be forced artificially and, in the nature of a repressive state, even those closest to Fidel had appeared to be loyal to him before their defection. A policy which called for an outside invasion first and an internal rebellion afterward could never be sure of any rebellion.

Not only did the invasion come as a surprise but it discouraged the anti-Castro forces inside from doing anything until its nature and extent had become clear, and by then it was too late. No one would risk his life for an invasion that could not succeed because it was too small, or for an invasion that could succeed by itself because it had the full backing of the United States—and the latter was the first impression. Thus the invasion plan made the first stage of the battle a purely military one on a very limited terrain—a beachhead. It enabled Castro to concentrate overwhelming forces at a single point for a knockout blow.

The other course would have been to put the rebellion first and to hold an invasion in reserve to support an already existing popular movement, as Miró Cardona had explained in January 1961 and as the *Bases Confidenciales* had implied in March. But the leaders of the Revolutionary Council were not strong or self-confident enough to insist in practice on what they had agreed in principle. Some went along with the invasion because they had for many months given it their blessings, and others because they did not wish to open themselves to the charge that they had stood in the way of a possible victory. The two operations—the political, exemplified by the Revolutionary Council, and the military, represented by the invasion force—were kept so far apart that at least one portion of the Council knew little about the details of the invasion.

The situation in Cuba had been building up to some kind of popular explosion, but it could not be synchronized with the "deadline fixation," both Cuban and American. There was, of course, no guarantee that there would ever be a large-scale popular rebellion against Castro; the existing policy, however, had for many months not even encouraged one, politically or practically; and there were no guarantees about anything else. As long as the United States did not wish to be dragged into full-scale intervention, the priority for the anti-Castro forces in Cuba was a matter of necessity, not



of choice. The Eisenhower Administration had not given the underground priority, and the Kennedy Administration ruled out full-scale intervention.

Yet, short of the Castro regime's collapse at the first blow from the outside, the invasion required a spontaneous outburst of popular support or an ever-increasing measure of American support. An invasion force which succeeded in overthrowing Castro without a demonstrative show of popular support could only have ruled Cuba in a state of perpetual civil war or as a thinly disguised American occupation. At best it would have postponed another outbreak of *Fidelismo* for a few months or years. At worst, it could have made Cuba into another Algeria. The alternative policy was formulated in the *Bases Confidenciales*, but never really put into practice. It is late, but not too late.

## 8. THE MORNING AFTER

**F**AILURE, as well as success, can bring out fundamental attitudes and values not altogether clear in the course of the struggle, and the failure of Cochinos Bay has brought them out in many quarters more sharply than ever before.

President Kennedy's first reaction expressed a determination not to accept the defeat as final and an intention to rethink the whole problem posed by Cuba. Perhaps the most significant feature of his speech on April 20 was the suggestion that the parts played by arms and politics in such a crisis urgently needed re-examination. If he seriously follows up his remark that "too long we have fixed our eyes on traditional military needs," more may have been gained from the Cuban defeat than lost.

The Republicans have been somewhat inhibited from making political capital of the Cuban setback, despite the President's willingness to assume full responsibility for it, because of its peculiarly bipartisan ancestry. If the Cuban venture had proved a success, the Republicans might not have been able to resist pointing out that the Democrats had merely carried out what they had prepared for them, as Nixon did not fail to point out in the case of the first American astronaut.

Eisenhower's sense of fair play and national interest made him a model of discretion in this difficult moment, but Nixon could not altogether resist temptation. The former Vice President hinted broadly that "more power" should have been committed in Cuba to compensate for the mistaken intelligence estimates. This divergence may reflect more of a difference between Eisenhower and Nixon than between Kennedy and Eisenhower. It has been credibly reported that Nixon once argued in favor of landing American forces in Cuba if the exiles could not make it on their own, and that Eisenhower vetoed the proposal.

Among the Cuban exiles, the defeat has had the effect of intensifying all those divisions which existed before. The Right and Center have been overcome by pessimism bordering on despair, and publicly or privately express their belief in direct U.S. intervention as the only salvation. On the other hand, the anti-Castro Left which had never believed in the precedence given

to an armed invasion under U.S. auspices has been confirmed in its view and holds it more strongly than ever. Because of this post-invasion schism, the Cuban Revolutionary Council has fallen apart.

The invasion also provided Fidel Castro with the occasion for officially confirming the "socialist" character of the Cuban revolution. He actually did so for the first time on April 16, the day before the invasion, in a rather casual, mocking reference to the "imperialists": "That is what they cannot forgive—that we should be here under their nose and that we have effected a socialist revolution under the very nose of the United States."

In his speech on May 1, however, he made the pronouncement somewhat more formally: "Our deeds have signaled to the world the birth of a patriotic democratic and socialist revolution." What he meant by "socialist" he made sufficiently clear by hailing support from "the powerful socialist world, headed by the great Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China." Since May 1, the "socialist revolution" in Cuba has become *de rigueur* for all means of communication in Cuba.

Ché Guevara once invented the theory, since repeated by innumerable epigoni, that the United States was responsible for Castro's actions or "responses," and presumably the latest coincidence between the frustrated invasion and Cuban "socialism" fits this pattern perfectly. A French writer, Claude Julien, has written a book in behalf of the view that the United States forced Castro to betray his own revolution to the Communists and Soviet Russia.<sup>19</sup>

It is not necessary to exculpate the United States of all blame or even a large share of the blame for the recent history of Cuba to feel, as I do, that this thesis is mistaken, profoundly mistaken. Fidel Castro and his inner circle have never been innocent victims of circumstances; they have always been the engine of this revolution in perpetual motion; they have leaped at one pretext or another to do what they wanted to do; they have incessantly increased their power by taking the initiative against their enemies and relentlessly pressing the advantage. A revolutionary leader does not betray the fundamental character of his revolution because American oil companies refuse to refine Soviet oil or because the United States suspends a sugar quota that has been attacked as "a symbol of colonialism." If he is really committed to a new social order different from capitalism and Communism, he does not resist the one by capitulating to the other with the speed of a push-button operation.

By waiting for the opportune occasion, every aggressive action can be made to appear in a defensive light, but history teaches us to look into the more obscure past for the deeper causes and motivations of such immediate and far-reaching "responses." In this case, as I have suggested, the decisive moves were made behind the scenes in 1959, and only their consequences were put on public display in 1960 and 1961.

No, Castro and his group have not merely been reacting to American moves, as if they were American puppets *manqués*, as if the United States

<sup>19</sup> *La Révolution Cubaine*, Julliard, 1961.



always pulled the strings which forced them to do what they did not want to do or go where they did not want to go. This interpretation of the Castro revolution does not even do justice to its leader; it deprives him of any real control over his own revolution. There may be more than one way to explain why Castro betrayed the democratic revolution, and one of them is to blame the United States, but the betrayal is still no less a betrayal. I believe that the truth must be sought elsewhere, in the inner life and dynamism of *Fidelismo*.

## 9. THE DAY OF RECKONING

ONLY THE ingenuous can still believe that Fidel Castro walked into a Communist trap or that he gave up the democratic road because the United States did not give him enough support in his early months in power. The Communists and Fidel walked toward each other, each with his eyes open, each filling a need in the other. The "trap theory" attributes a gullibility to Fidel which is again hardly fair to him. Official American offers might have embarrassed him a little more than the policy which respected his clearly understood preference for private rather than government forms of aid, but I fear that they would have accomplished little else. The \$16 million credit which the oil companies extended to Castro's Cuba did not save them from expropriation, and five or ten times that amount would not have bought them an indulgence. External circumstances influenced the Castro regime's methods and timing, but they did not determine its nature and direction.

The ordinary Western mind can only with the greatest difficulty comprehend the dynamism of this revolution. It was not made by a revolutionary party which had struggled for years to formulate an ideology and create an organization. It derives from 12 men who made their way to the Sierra Maestra mountains in December 1956—less than five years ago!—and increased in number to only 300 in May 1958—little more than three years ago! Their victory over Batista's bloated Army and police was somewhat incredible, almost miraculous, and for them the miracles have not ceased.

It does not seem more far-fetched that Cuba should set off a Latin American revolution than that the tiny group in the Sierra Maestra should have set off a Cuban revolution. To this must be added the conviction that the Cuban revolution cannot be finally victorious without a Latin American revolution, and that a Latin American revolution cannot be finally victorious without a revolution in the United States—an eventuality to which Fidel has of late made frequent allusions, only half in jest.

All this may be due to dizziness from success or illusions of grandeur, but the spirit of *Fidelismo* cannot be fathomed without taking it into account. The ideological and organizational vacuum of *Fidelismo* has been filled by Communism, which, in turn, has been given a new confidence and impetus by *Fidelismo*. As a result of this interpenetration, Cuba has begun to resemble every other Communist state in its essential political, economic and ideological conformation; the "humanistic" improvisations of Castro's first year in power may soon seem just as far away as the Soviet's New

Economic Policy of the 1920s seemed from Stalin's forced collectivization in the 1930s.

Whether the United States was wise to have suspended the sugar quota when it did is less important, in the long run, than that the suspension was the answer to a *Fidelista* prayer. The technique used to bring about the break of diplomatic relations—a 48-hour demand for a drastic reduction of U.S. Embassy personnel—was similar. The dictate faced the United States with the choice of bowing to an ultimatum or going a step further and getting the inevitable over with quickly. Short of utter capitulation, I cannot conceive of any U.S. policy that would have satisfied the souls of Fidel, Raúl and "El Ché."

For those who desire, condone or ignore the Communist conquest of Cuba, the recent invasion presents no difficult problem. They can gloat over the failure or enjoy an orgy of *Schadenfreude*. Some can do so, however, only by deceiving themselves about the reality of Communist influence in Cuba. But the day of reckoning must come. At the present rate of *Fidelista*-Communist fusion, they will soon have to recognize that reality or risk making laughingstocks of themselves. And if they do not go along to the bitter end, they too will know what it means to be "betrayed" by Fidel Castro; he may even ridicule them on television if they should make nuisances of themselves complaining of their disillusionment.

"Non-intervention" also presents them with no great problem. As long as the only intervention is by definition United States, everything becomes absurdly simple. But the Cuban revolution has never been that simple. It has never been contained within the borders of Cuba. In 1955, Castro used Mexico as the training ground for his invasion force. He set up an organization in the United States to collect funds and recruit volunteers. In March 1957, President José Figueres of Costa Rica sent the first arms to Castro's forces in the Sierra Maestra. To overthrow Batista, Castro accepted aid wherever he could get it. If the same stringent rules were applied to him as some are trying to apply to his present enemies, Batista might still be in power.

Since 1959, Castro has been intervening flagrantly throughout Latin America. In November 1960, young anti-Castro Cubans broke into the Cuban Embassy in Lima, Peru, and forced the Chargé d'Affaires to give them a file of documents marked "Strictly Confidential." Photostats of these documents have been published, and the then Secretary of the Embassy Andrés Quintín Noas, now in exile, has confirmed their authenticity. One letter, dated October 4, 1960, from Ambassador Luis Ricardo Alonso to Raúl Castro, reported the payment of \$15,000 (427,500 Peruvian soles) to eight professors, 16 newspapers and magazines, 15 labor unions and 10 political organizations, and another \$15,000 to the Communist party in 13 Peruvian cities and towns. All the names and amounts were carefully recorded. As a result of this evidence, Peru broke diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Intervention can take many forms—from the Castro regime's vicious war of nerves against the admirable Administration of Governor Luis Muñoz Marín in Puerto Rico to the Soviet bloc's huge investment of arms and



manipulation of a servile Cuban Communist party. Much of what passes for "non-intervention" in the Cuban civil war is, in practice, an acceptance of unilateral Soviet intervention.

For those who do not desire or cannot ignore the Communist conquest of Cuba, the present situation poses difficult and complex problems. The invasion was indefensible in conception as well as execution, but much of the criticism has been transmuted into support or apologetics for Castro's regime. In the end, the most unfortunate result of the fiasco may be that the guilt arising out of it has sought an outlet in tolerance for and subtle identification with an onrushing totalitarianism. I have never heard an argument in favor of the Cuban dictatorship—from the uselessness of elections to the mistreatment of the Cuban peasants who constituted about one-third of the nation—which could not be applied with slight modifications to virtually every other country. Some of the criticisms of the invasion require at least as much criticism as the invasion itself.<sup>20</sup>

I cannot separate the politics of arms from the arms of politics. The politics of the arms that went into the invasion of Cochinos Bay made the failure a costly defeat and would have made the success a Pyrrhic victory. But to say this and no more is to doom in advance the prospect of any future anti-Castro opposition, even the most democratic. These arms were used badly, but any politics in Cuba today demands arms. Castro cannot be overthrown except by force, just as there was no other way to overthrow Batista. When Castro sentenced Matos to 20 years' imprisonment, he served notice on all opposition to go underground and fight force with force or submit without a struggle. As long as there are men and women in Cuba who believe in civil liberties, representative government, land reform instead of Soviet-style state farms, freedom of expression, association with the democratic West, and free trade unions, there will be an underground and, despite the present setback, it will revive and grow. If no one else will provide the necessary conditions for its growth, Castro and the Communists will do so.

But no anti-Castro movement can resist Russian tanks and Czechoslovak machine guns with sympathy alone. It would be more humane and more honest to advise any movement not to resist than to resist with bare hands. Castro's democratic opponents have the right and the duty to obtain arms where they can, as Castro did and as other revolutionary movements have done. The United States can help, but a democratic Cuban opposition worthy of the name will accept arms or other assistance only on its own terms. Whatever the United States or any other power does or does not do must influence the situation in Cuba; the United States could remove its influence

20. This is particularly true of the "Open Letter to President Kennedy" drafted by a few members of the Harvard faculty and signed by 70 intellectuals in the Boston area, as published in the *New York Times*, May 10, 1961. If it were merely an anti-invasion appeal, I would have no quarrel with it. But it goes much farther afield and betrays such curious squeamishness in its references to the character of the Castro regime, such superficiality in its explanation of the "sharp increase in the power of the local Communist party" and such gullibility in its recommendations for detaching the Castro regime from the Communist bloc, that one wonders whether many of its distinguished signatories ever devoted much time or energy to a study of recent Cuban history.

only by disappearing. Some forms of "non-intervention" are nothing more than acquiescence in someone else's intervention; and some forms of "intervention" are so wrong and futile that they amount in their practical effect to non-intervention.

In and through Cuba, I fear, we are reliving many of the problems that plagued us in the era of Hitler and Stalin. Hitler never permitted us to forget the crimes of the Versailles Treaty, the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic and the millions of unemployed. The Bolsheviks never permitted us to forget the dark Tsarist past. The *Líder Máximo* never permits us to forget the evils of imperialism, the misdeeds of previous democratic governments and the poverty of the Cuban peasants. But the avenger of Versailles, the grave digger of Weimar and the savior of the unemployed was also a demonic nihilist who inflicted such degradation on his own people and infamies on other peoples that they cannot even now be uttered without sickening us. The absolute power of one party degenerated into the absolute power of one man, and that man degenerated into a psychopathic executioner of millions, among them his own comrades. The totalitarian disease in Germany and Russia did not strike in all its virulence at once; it crept up on its victims in stages; it came sugar-coated as national liberation and economic development. In the end, however, one thing mattered more than all else—the capacity for evil of these all-embracing, insatiable, suffocating tyrannies grew with their accretion of power. Each generation, it seems, must learn the lesson in its own way. Unfortunately, this lesson is always an expensive one.





## APPENDIX

### CONFIDENTIAL BASES OF UNITY BETWEEN THE 'FRENTE REVOLUCIONARIO DEMOCRATICO' AND THE 'MOVIMIENTO REVOLUCIONARIO DEL PUEBLO'\*

#### I. FUNDAMENTAL ORGANIZATION OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

1. The person designated to preside over the Revolutionary Council will select freely the members of the Council indispensable for the tasks in exile; the others will be selected in Cuba, inasmuch as the Revolutionary Council should be formed by persons in exile but also, in its majority, by persons fighting in Cuba when the [present] regime falls and who, for reasons of security, cannot be designated now.

2. Once the Communist tyranny collapses, the Council of Ministers of the Provisional Government will be formed by members with portfolio to carry out the exclusive function of government and by six to ten members without portfolio who, jointly with the members with portfolio, will exercise the legislative function.

3. These members without portfolio will be designated by the President of the Revolutionary Council who will select them from lists of three names submitted by each revolutionary group.

4. This Revolutionary Council will assume the functions of the Provisional Government when it moves to Cuba.

#### II. INSURRECTIONAL STRUGGLE

1. The Council which is formed as a consequence of this agreement must give maximum priority to the aid of the combatants who are already inside Cuba fighting against the Communist oppressor.

2. No person who held an objectionably responsible position with the criminal dictatorship of Batista can be admitted into any armed force which may be organized outside of Cuba. Because of the very harmful effect that any apparent utilization of these elements can have, both organizations agree that they must share the responsibilities of preventing even the use of these persons in the recruiting offices.

3. The military commands of all the revolutionary forces which may be organized outside of Cuba must be in the hands of Cubans who give full guarantee to the President of the Council and to both groups (which sign this document) with respect to their integrity and understanding, their responsibilities and functions in a democratic society, their full deference to the Authority of the Revolutionary Council during the insurrectional struggle and to the Civil Government of the Republic.

4. The Revolutionary Council must immediately assume the responsibility that these criteria should fully prevail in the forces which are being organized.

#### III. AGRARIAN REFORM

Both groups declare that they will take steps to reach an agreement within the next two weeks on the effective form of prohibiting *latifundia*, as a consequence of which a fundamental criterion would be established to avoid harmful conflicts at the initiation of the Provisional Government.

For the FRD  
A. DE VARONA

New York, March 22, 1961  
For the MRP  
M. RAY

\*Unofficial translation.

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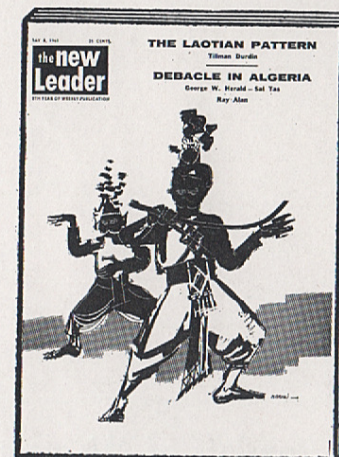
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